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FARM PAPER LETTER

United States
Department of
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SPEAK OUT FOR AG! Yes, answers Julie Unverfehrt of Okawville, Ill., this country's Miss Agriculture. Many of today's problems in agriculture, she **WHO? ME?** says, stem from a lack of communication. Writing in the MID AM REPORTER, the official publication of Mid-America Dairymen Inc., she urges you to tell agriculture's story to your children and in speeches, and she offers tips on how to write your own script.

Unverfehrt, 21, was majoring in agriculture communications when she was chosen from 10 finalists to become the nation's first Miss Agriculture last spring. Now, she is taking a year's leave from the University of Illinois to work fulltime as a speaker on behalf of agriculture.



As one example of what you could say for agriculture, she writes:

"Less than 3% of the United States population is engaged in farming. This small minority not only is helping to feed the world; it also is the lifeline of our nation's economy ..."

As you set forth to take Miss Agriculture's advice, here are some newly updated facts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. You can weave these into those talks you make to civic clubs and other groups:

-- American agriculture is the world's biggest commercial industry, with assets exceeding \$1 trillion. This industry employs more than 22 million people, 20% of America's labor force. The agricultural industry includes farming, transporting, processing, manufacturing, and retailing food and fiber. The combined agricultural industry accounts for \$609.5 billion, 20 percent of the nation's gross national product.

-- With less than three-tenths of 1% of the world's farmers and farmworkers, the United States produces these amounts of the world's total food supply: soybeans, 64%; grapefruit, 56%; corn, 46%; sorghum, 31%; oranges, 25%; poultry, 24%; green peas, 23%; beef, 23%; cotton, 18%; wheat, 17%; eggs, 14%; and pork, 13%.

-- How times have changed. Fifty years ago, there were 6.7 million farms in the United States. The average size farm was 152 acres. There were 12 million farmers and farmworkers, each of whom, on the average, produced enough food and fiber for 10 people. Today, there are 2.4 million farms. The average size farm is 432 acres, and there are 3.5 million farmers and farmworkers.

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-- One farmworker now provides food and fiber for 79 people, compared with 55 people in 1973 and 31 people in 1963. "Farmworkers" include the farmer and unpaid family members who work on the farm, which constitute 3/5 of all farmworkers, plus full and part-time paid employees.

-- Per capita annual consumption of food in the United States is 1,365 pounds (retail weight equivalent). One farmworker produces an average of about 108,000 pounds, almost 54 tons of food.

-- We spent less than 16% (15.6%), on the average, of our disposable income (income after personal taxes) on food in 1983 compared with as much as 60% to 70% in some countries. In 1973, we spent 16.2%; in 1963, 18.7%.

-- The farmer gets an average of about 33 cents of the dollar consumers spend on food grown on U.S. farms. That's about five cents less than he got 20 years ago.

-- The U.S. agricultural system is the most productive in the world. Farm output has increased more than 60% since 1950, while total inputs into farming have remained about the same.

-- In the last 20 years, agricultural productivity per hour worked on the farm has increased more than three times faster than industrial productivity per hour worked.

-- Today, one hour of farm labor produces 16 times as much food and fiber as it did 60 years ago.

-- One farmworker creates jobs for 6 nonfarm people who produce the things farmers need and who process, transport and merchandise the things farmers produce.

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YEAR'S EXPORTS SEEN HITTING \$38 BILLION U.S. agricultural exports are expected to reach \$38 billion for the fiscal year 1984, which ended September 30, when the final figures are in. This compares with \$34.8 billion for the previous year. During the first 11 months of this fiscal year, exports climbed to \$35.1 billion, 10% above those for the same period last year, despite lower volumes in some products.

Imports of U.S. farm products also are up, adding up to \$17.3 billion for the 11 months. This is a 16% gain over the same period a year ago.

Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Indonesia and Australia supplied most of the imports. Contributing to the gain were coffee, cocoa, rubber, tea, sugar, fruits and vegetables.

For more information, call Tom Warden (202) 447-4863.

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HORTICULTURAL EXPORTS DIP 2% A \$9 million drop in shipments to Canada was the major reason for the August decline of U.S. horticultural exports. The month's total was \$190 million, down 2% from last year. For the 11 completed months of fiscal 1984, exports of horticultural products are 3.2% below last year.

On the upbeat side, U.S. exports to the Arabian Peninsula were up 9% and sales to Japan rose close to 3% over last year's pace.

Singapore and Hong Kong markets are holding steady, but the remaining East Asian markets recorded a 26% decline in export sales. The brightest spots among the commodities were fresh vegetables, led by celery and onions, and tree nuts, led by almonds.

Other horticultural highlights:

- World almond production for 1984/85 has recovered from last season's low levels, basically due to California's record crops. Supplies in the major producing countries of the Mediterranean are down slightly because of the short crops in Italy and Turkey and very low carryin stocks in Spain.
- Filbert (hazelnut) production in the major producing countries will fall this year because of the normal downturn in the production cycle after the exceptionally large harvest last season. Excess carryover stocks in Turkey are being used to produce oil.
- Reduced acreage and flooding have created a shortage of onions and garlic in South Korea.
- Brazil again is issuing import licenses for apples and pears.
- Japanese imports of Florida grapefruit may decline in 1984/85.

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CALIFORNIA TOPS IN CASH RECEIPTS With \$13.5 billion, California led in 1983 farm cash receipts. Iowa, with \$9.3 billion, came in second, followed by Texas, \$9 billion; and Illinois, \$8.1 billion. Minnesota, with \$6.3 billion, replaced Nebraska as the fifth best earner. Top earners in cash receipts retained their year-earlier rankings: California, Illinois, Iowa, Texas, and Florida.

California also was the leading state in net farm income, at \$3 billion, followed by Florida, \$1.5 billion, and Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin, at \$1 billion each.

Nebraska farmers had the highest debt as a percentage of worth of their assets. Farmers in South Dakota, Georgia, New York and Minnesota followed.

Last year's crop production, especially from spring-planted crops, was reduced by the summer drought's impact on yields and government programs which curbed the number of acres planted.

For more information, call Sandra Suddendorf at (202) 447-4190.

WORLD TRADE PICTURE BRIGHTENS A LITTLE On the whole, global crop supplies are slightly above a month ago. Wheat continues to gain, with further yield improvement and a record crop expected in the European Community. Global coarse grain supplies are down marginally from last month. Continued deterioration in Soviet grain production suggests a higher level of worldwide grain trade.

Export prospects for U.S. wheat and coarse grains are improved from last month. But a reduction in feed use is more than offsetting for corn, and projected U.S. stocks are up.

World soybean supplies are down marginally from a month ago, as larger U.S. 1984/85 carryin stocks were offset by indicated production declines in the United States and Brazil last month. Projected U.S. crush and export levels are up this month, slightly reducing expected carryover stocks.

Cotton supplies have been further boosted by improved yield prospects in China. U.S. stocks are projected at last month's level but well above beginning stocks.

Several changes were made in U.S. corn estimates for 1983/84 and forecasts for 1984/85. For the 1983/84 marketing year just ended, exports were adjusted up to reflect September shipments, the feed and residual category was lowered, and ending stocks were raised.

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'BOUT YOU 'N ME -- Linda Kluender and Ann Christenson have joined the staff of **THE LAND** in Mankato, Minn., as assistant editors, reports Carlienne Frish, editor of the publication. Julie Savage has left the publication to become communications director of the **AGRICENTER INTERNATIONAL** in Memphis, Tenn. Kluender is a southern Minnesota farmer who has been editor of the **Hubbard Milling Co.** publication. Christenson has worked for the **INDIANAPOLIS TIMES** and as a public relations consultant.

SUCCESSFUL FARMING magazine introduces **FARM COMPUTER NEWS**, a bimonthly magazine on farm technology. Gary Vincent will be the editor.

Martin Schreiber, former acting governor of Wisconsin, will become publisher of the **PCA FARMING** magazine by November 1, says Jonathan Pellegrin, chairman of the board for Johnson Hill Press Inc. PCA is short for Production Credit Associations, on whose behalf the magazine is published. Pellegrin said **PCA FARMING** is one of the most widely circulated farm magazines in the nation, with a circulation of more than 550,000.

FARM PRESS PUBLICATIONS INC., Clarksdale, Miss., will launch another publication, **MIDWEST FARM PRESS**, this coming January, says Farm Press president Tommy L. Keith. Content will include news stories and in-depth weekly features on topics of immediate concern. Keith says he's shooting to have four Midwest editors headquartered at strategic locations and an in-house editor based in Clarksdale.


Clay Napier
Editor, FARM PAPER LETTER